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(54) **Ligament loading device**

(57) A ligament loading device (50) is used in conjunction with an MRI apparatus to image damaged ligaments in the knee. The leg of a patient is strapped into a thigh harness (70) and a lower leg harness (74) with the knee lying over a point (72) in the imaging region of the imager. The thigh harness (70) is fixed, but the lower leg harness (74) rotates about a central pivot point (72) to select an angle for the leg. Pressure devices (84a, 84b) such as sacs or bellows apply pressure to the thigh in one direction transverse to the thigh. Pressure devices

(100a, 100b) apply pressure to the lower leg in an opposing direction transverse to the lower leg in order to move the bones of the knee apart to facilitate imaging of the ligaments. It is also possible to inspect and measure the movement of the bones using the device in conjunction with an MRI apparatus. A switch (108) selects between two pressure applying modes, both of which move the bones of the knee apart, but in opposite directions. Pressure is applied with a manual bulb (103) so that a diagnostician can physically feel the amount of pressure that is being applied to the patient's knee.

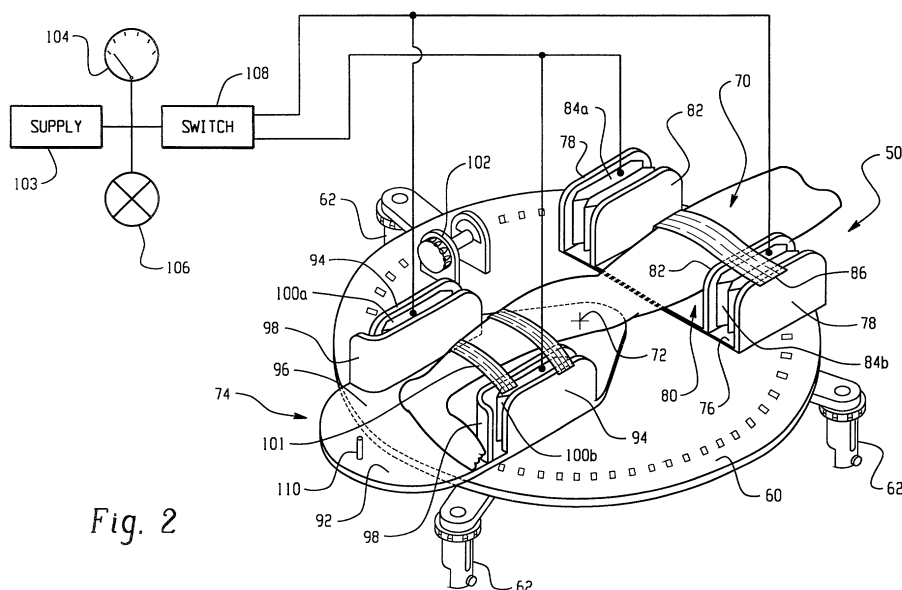


Fig. 2



European Patent
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PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

which under Rule 45 of the European Patent Convention EP 01 31 0610 shall be considered, for the purposes of subsequent proceedings, as the European search report

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X A	US 5 743 264 A (BONUTTI PETER M) 28 April 1998 (1998-04-28) * column 13, line 47 - column 16, line 5; figures 8-11, 37-40 * * column 5, line 33 - column 9, line 36 * * column 1, line 45 - column 2, line 47 *	1-5, 7, 13-20 6	A61B5/103 A61B5/055
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X A	US 5 427 116 A (NOONE MICHAEL) 27 June 1995 (1995-06-27) * column 1, line 40 - line 65 * * column 3, line 34 - column 4, line 64; figure 2 *	13 1, 7, 14	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) A61B A61F
<p style="text-align: center;">-/--</p>			
INCOMPLETE SEARCH			
<p>The Search Division considers that the present application, or one or more of its claims, does/do not comply with the EPC to such an extent that a meaningful search into the state of the art cannot be carried out, or can only be carried out partially, for these claims.</p> <p>Claims searched completely :</p> <p>Claims searched incompletely :</p> <p>Claims not searched :</p> <p>8-12</p> <p>Reason for the limitation of the search:</p> <p>Article 52 (4) EPC - Diagnostic method practised on the human or animal body</p>			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		1 October 2002	Neef, T
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPC FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C07)



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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 01 31 0610

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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